613 the same for the third grandson. The group of the sons' three families
614 constitutes what is called etuña or aval. The tribe (ayoh) gives its name to all the families which have been established since its founder.

Social relations are rare with foreign tribes, the tribe forming a
614 homogeneous whole where the stranger is received only with reserve
609 and when he shows goods which prove that his visit has no other aim
578 but to come and look for a woman to marry. The [92] tribes are often hostile to one another, and while they no longer can make war, this hostility is still demonstrated by an atmosphere of haggling which always forces the weakest to give way. Several tribes have thus had to leave the N'Djolé region to settle farther downstream on the Ogooué because they could no longer live beside their neighbors.

574 On the other hand, visits among members of one tribe are frequent, presents are exchanged, and wives are bought.

761 Death (awu). Death is regarded as a change of village. After his
715 death, a person has become an inhabitant of the big village created by Nzame beyond the earth. There he will find the members of his family who already live there, and therefore he follows a very wide trail which leads him to the bank of the river Endam where his relatives who died before him come to await him. It may be that the crossing of the river is not immediate, and the dead man may have to stay for several days on the bank, which happens especially to people of whom the bivur have made human victims.

●763 The dying person (edzegela) is attended by women who, when death has occurred, announce it on coming out of the hut, where all the inhabitants of the village then assemble. The corpse is taken from its bed and laid on the ground on mats; it is washed, rubbed with oil, and clothed in a white loincloth, then rolled in the mats and in pieces of bark, and tied. It stays this way in the hut until the grave is dug.

764 Funeral ceremonies immediately follow death. The wrapped body is carried by two men to the place of burial. The inhabitants of the village follow, one behind the other, and are present at the interment, which is done with a vine holding the body so that it does not fall suddenly to the bottom of the hole dug to receive it. The grave is oriented east-west, or is dug parallel to the course of the river which flows by the village, the head of the dead being placed upstream or to the east, the feet downstream or toward the west, so that the dead will lie in the direction of the river Endam. Before the grave is filled,

764 there are placed in it the arms or some everyday objects of the deceased. Then everyone goes back to the village, the women crying. The close relatives of the deceased go into mourning, which is much stricter for a woman than for a man; we have already seen what comprises the mourning of a widow. As for the widower, after having
765 stayed for two or three days in a state of prostration, often simulated, he continues to look after his work as usual, remaining meanwhile under the obligation to stay dirty until the celebrations at the end of mourning.

763 The autopsy of the corpse to find the evur is done at the edge of the
715 grave, after the women have been sent away. The package containing [93] the corpse is undone and the practitioner operates with a large knife made especially for this purpose. He has previously painted his face half black, half red so that the deceased will not recognize him and cannot come from his abode in the village of Nzame to avenge himself for the mutilation he is undergoing. When the operation is finished, the corpse is sewed up, re-wrapped, and placed normally in the grave.

764 There is no cemetery, and the dead are buried a short distance from the village, almost behind the huts. Sometimes when a person is thought to have died from having been eaten by the bivur, in order that the grave may not be violated for the purpose of removing a piece of the corpse, it is buried in the very hut of the head of the family.

715 The life of the dead in the village of Nzame is identical with that which they had at home; they do the same work, have the same entertainments, marry, procreate, always stay young, and also have the power to do whatever they wish; it is enough for them to express a wish for it to be granted.

The dead sometimes leave their abode to return to the earth, perhaps in the form of phantoms with long hair to frighten the living, meeting a phantom being fatal, or perhaps in the shape of animals in order to avenge themselves. Some may change themselves into an elephant and ravage the fields of their enemies; others change into a panther and kill all the livestock and poultry and sometimes even the inhabitants of the village where they were unhappy in life. When they
[181] wish to be beneficent, they appear in the dreams of their relatives and friends and give them wise advice.

road. The missions have tried, with unequal results, to ameliorate the fate of old people without children; certain clan "societies" have also been active in this direction, but none of it goes very far. Moreover, the old people accept their lot and occasionally joke about it among themselves with the rather biting irony that seems one of the mental characteristics of the group. Some old people kill themselves "from being tired of life." According to Trilles, some used to burn themselves to death voluntarily. According to Largeau, the heirs took the initiative in this so as to make the inheritance available.

The least wretched old people are those with children, particularly sons (1), since daughters usually live with their affinal family. There

1. Cf. Eza Boto, Ville cruelle (no. 182), for an illustration of relations between mother and son.

does exist a genuine obligation for children to provide parents with food, which is sanctioned by paternal or maternal curse in case of default.

f. Death and the Afterlife

Every death is suspect, but that of a nya mɔ̂ɔ̂ more than another, because a nya mɔ̂ɔ̂ does not die: someone kills him, though it may be none other than himself. Therefore the death of a man of some importance was always followed by an autopsy: the ngengañ would cut open the body and examine the thoracic organs, nlem, the seat of intellect and will, to look for signs of sorcery, the work either of another or of the dead man should his évu have turned against him or been killed by a malignant agency. There also appears to have been a magic process, évɔ̂mɔ̂ɔ̂, that revived the dead long enough to put questions concerning the cause of death.

If the autopsy revealed that the deceased was a sorcerer, nnem, the body was burned or thrown into a large river or perhaps buried at a crossroads far from the village. If he were mie, free of évu, the regular mortuary rites ensued. The body was washed in warm water, massaged and softened, then rubbed with baa dissolved in palm oil, wrapped in a white loincloth, watched over by armed men while the grave was made ready and the relatives /102/ and affinal kin /alliés/

commun/ were buried by their co-wives and the women of their affinal family. Bongô and bikeñelé were buried at home with no other ceremonial than the mother's mourning.

When signs of sorcery were found on a corpse, the ngengañ or mvimvi'i turned to divination to find the presumed culprit, who was subjected to an ordeal of bitter herbs. As a general thing, wives had to submit regularly to the pimento or ant ordeals to make them confess not only the part they might have had in the husband's death but also their adulteries. When no one was found responsible for the death of a mie individual (nonsorcerer), it was decided that he had been the victim of a breaking of taboo, nsem, sometimes unwittingly. Whatever the cause of death, sorcery or nsem or repercussion from an act of sorcery, purification always occurred, generally by a sacrifice at the end of the mourning period (meyep). /103/

The duration of mourning was, and still is, a mbu /six months/, but it is now less rigorous. Formerly the wives of the dead man were secluded, naked, for a month in his hut, the first wife lying on his bed; their heads and all their body hair were shaved, and they were painted white with ash and forbidden to wash or do their hair until the end of mourning. The dead man's brothers and sons shaved their heads and let their beards grow without trimming or combing; their foreheads were painted white and they wore only old clothes. They had to observe a series of prohibitions concerning certain ways of hunting, the eating of certain kinds of game (perhaps the dead man's personal totem?), all journeys, the circumcision of the dead man's sons, the use of a bed, etc. The end of mourning was marked by a sacrifice and often by a melan ceremony in order to enter into communication with the dead man.

The strictest mourning was observed for the death of an esa, a man of the father's age grade, less for a monyañ, and hardly any for a mongô. With regard to women, a man observed solemn mourning only for his mother and first wife, and this meant mourning within the family, while a man's death involved the whole village. However, an epidemic was followed by heavy mourning, and when the one presumed responsible was identified, it was not enough that he pay avutan, compensation, he was burned or drowned (his immediate family was constrained to pay the avutan), and then a general purification was undertaken.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

the natural curve of the branches. Stones are employed for rolling food, especially for crushing and rolling the *ngon* seed. Shells of large land molluscs are cut in half and used for spoons, small gourds being used for the same purpose. Large gourds are used for water dippers and bottles. Very many uses are found for the forest gourds, not the least ingenious being the use of a hollow stemmed gourd for administering a rectal injection. Gourds are used for the sounding boards of the musical instrument called *mvet*. The people find many uses for bamboo. It is used in construction of houses, fish baskets and traps are made from it, fences to protect paths during tribal wars are made of sharp pointed bamboo poles; and small sharpened pieces of bamboo with poisoned tips are buried in the forest paths, point upward, to wound and poison the naked feet of an unsuspecting enemy. The teeth and claws of leopards and bush cats, elephant tail, antelope feet, horns and forest beans are used in their natural form as personal ornaments. Leopard teeth are always considered valuable as *bieng* (fetish) and are much sought after; they are frequently imitated in ivory. I have not seen the defences of animals employed as artificial defences, except as fetish. Long tough forest thorns are often used as awls and needles for piercing and sewing skins. I once saw an *nganga* (witch doctor) perform a post-mortem examination on a woman. After he had discovered the cause of death, which he announced to the expectant crowd as being due to "six witches eating her liver," he first pierced the abdominal walls with a long hard thorn, and then sewed up the body with a bamboo needle threaded with pineapple fibre. I have seen only one cave dwelling; it was used by an isolated sufferer of the dread disease called by the natives *eubela* (a kind of sloughing phagedæna). When proper reed material for making thatch is scarce, large forest leaves are used, but they make very poor roofs, especially during the tornado season.

Conservatism.—The Fang are not quick to adopt reforms or to introduce new methods; they are more or less the slaves of custom, and have a superstitious dread of departing from ancestral habits. This refers to all the proceedings of life. Fang living in towns near Gaboon are almost daily coming in contact with white settlers, and to some extent, at least, appear to be changing their mode of living. It never appeared to me that a Fang had the same longing to be "just like a white man" as possesses the young Mpongwe and Benga men.

IX.—Ornamentation.

The patterns mostly seen in Fang ornamentation consist of bands, incised lines, elliptical punch marks, herring bone, lozenge pattern and cross lines. The natives do not possess a natural aptitude for drawing, and seldom attempt it. The few drawings I have seen on the bark walls of houses, supposed to represent men and women, were very crude and exaggerated in proportion. They have no idea whatever of perspective. They seem to interpret foreign drawings very readily. The Fang show considerable skill in plain wood carving, using an ordinary native knife. I have noticed that their carving improves very considerably when an imported pocket knife is the instrument employed.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

places where they are going to build these respectively), large bush rat, porcupine, squirrels, die in the traps; deer, gazelle, antelope, large deer and pigs die in the pitfalls. The animals which die in the *elem* are these. This is the *elem*.

XVII.—*Burials.*

Death is never considered as due to natural causes. Disease followed by death is due to *evus* (witch). It is not considered unlucky to attend a dying person. The body is usually left in the house until burial. Embalming is not practised. Mourners smear white clay on their bodies and wear necklaces of pineapple fibre for one moon (month). A coffin is not used and the body is buried in the sitting posture. After burial the grave is levelled off as is the case almost throughout West Africa; the only difference between the burial of a headman and a common man is in the amount of visitors and mourning, and the quarrelling over his goods. Wives of a dead headman remain in mourning from one to three moons (months). The witch doctor, *nyengan*, usually performs a post mortem to find the witch. I attended a post mortem on an old woman. The witch doctor ripped open the abdomen with an old rusty knife, grasped and cut away the uterus and holding it up to the crowd declared "Six witches!" The crowd passed the word "six witches," and spoke the praises of the witch doctor. Relations usually continue to mourn or wail for one moon while inside the house or at work in the gardens. The most common wail is *Ó nan Ó! Ó tat Ó!* (Oh mother! Oh father!).

XVIII.—*Abbo.*

This is a dance. It is not *bieng* (medicine) nor is it *ebi*. It is, however, practised by men only. The women must not see it. The latter stay within doors, and only hear the words which the men speak outside. The men speak with artificial voices, so that the women cannot recognise who it is that is speaking. (*Fam a kobe ne bidi zia ekôk.*) To make the artificial sounds they use a membrane (*ten*) which encloses the young of the spider (*ndendde*). This they spread over a hole (about ¾ inch diameter) near the small end of an elephant tusk (*ndzeng nsuk*) from 1 to 2½ feet in length, attaching it with beeswax (*ebé*) or a liquid which is obtained from a plantain stalk fresh cut. This juice is called *ekiel*. It possesses an adhesive property. The man blows on the large end of the ivory. A curious sound then issues through the membrane so that the man's voice cannot be recognised. This instrument is called *ndzeng ekôm*. The act of playing on the instrument is called *e kobe ekôm* (*e kobe*, talk). The performer sings songs; the words are distinctly heard. He sings and all others sing responsively (*a ye bi'bongane Fake*).

Many songs are used in *ekôm*. Here are three specimens of them:—

(1) *Bonan Fakete kobe? Bun bongo ong nnot.* Who speaks any more? (*i.e.*, Be silent, let no one speak.) Others are listening with pleasure (*i.e.*, to the performance).